CONHI ONE OF THREE COLLEGES NATIONWIDE SELECTED FOR NLN PILOT PROJECT

The College has partnered with Texas Health Resources as part a national pilot study sponsored by the National League for Nursing (NLN). This spring, 20 BSN students in the capstone (or final) course began participating in the Accelerating to Practice (A2P) program. A2P is a major NLN initiative aimed at better preparing nurses for clinical practice. NLN has teamed up with Laredal, an international leader in simulation, as well as health care facilities and colleges of nursing in three locations across the country to provide simulated patient scenarios. These scenarios include an integrated student assessment platform designed to evaluate clinical competency in both academic and clinical settings.

CONHI PROFESSOR LANDS $3.3 MILLION NIH GRANT

Michael Nelson, an assistant professor of kinesiology, received a $3.3 million grant from the National Institutes of Health to study the link between fat storage in the heart and cardiovascular disease, as well as the influence of gender on the development of cardiac dysfunction.

Dr. Nelson and his team will look at the effects of excess fat in isolation of cardiovascular or metabolic risk factors. Preliminary data shows that men may respond differently than pre-menopausal women, who appear to be protected despite similar levels of fat in the heart. He and his team—which includes Mark Haykowsky, the College’s Moritz Chair of Genomics; Daisha Cipher, associate professor of nursing; and researchers from UT Southwestern, Cedars-Sinai Medical Center in Los Angeles, and the University of Colorado at Denver—will spend the next five years studying 60 healthy subjects between the ages of 18 and 30 to better understand the links between different factors. This is the largest NIH grant and the largest research grant in the history of the College of Nursing and Health Innovation. It is also the second grant Nelson has received this year. A few weeks ago, the NIH awarded him a $441,000 grant to build new imaging technology that will study blood vessel function in patients with heart failure that could lead to quicker diagnosis and life-saving treatment.

As a result of the work of talented scholars like Nelson, the College is now recognized as a leading center for health care research. In the last three years, it has added 10 leading health care scholars to its faculty—with plans to add six more this fall—and attracted more than $10 million in grants from sources such as the National Institutes of Health, the National Science Foundation, the American Heart Association, and the National Institute on Aging. The faculty’s work has appeared in numerous leading academic journals, including the Journal of Physiology, the American Journal of Managed Care, the Journal of the American College of Cardiology, and the Journal of the American Medical Association.

DEAN ANNE BAVIER RETIRING; UNIVERSITY COMMITTEE LAUNCHES SEARCH FOR REPLACEMENT

Anne Bavier, who as dean of the College has overseen an era of massive increases in enrollment and research activity, will retire over the summer. Dr. Bavier came to UTA in fall 2014 following a storied career that included stints as nursing dean at several universities, including the University of Connecticut, and a senior-level position at the National Institutes of Health.

UTA has commenced a search for a new dean with the assistance of a search committee and an executive search firm. The committee and the firm are currently vetting prospective candidates. To learn more about the search, visit uta.edu/leadershipsearches.

Submit nominations to Mirah.Horowitz@russellreynolds.com.
Researchers in the College’s Human Neural Cardiovascular Control Lab recently published two papers in prestigious journals.

In the first, a team led by Jennifer Vranish, a postdoctoral fellow in the lab, detailed racial differences in sympathetic vascular transduction and the control of blood pressure. The paper, published in the Journal Hypertension, is titled “Exaggerated Vasoconstriction to Spontaneous Bursts of Muscle Sympathetic Nerve Activity in Healthy Young Black Men.”

Vranish and her co-investigators found that, when at rest, healthy young black men exhibit exaggerated vasoconstriction and increases in blood pressure following spontaneous bursts of sympathetic nerve activity as compared to white men. Other co-authors of the study from the College included Associate Dean Paul Fadel, kinesiology Chair David Keller, graduate students Benjamin Young and Jordan Patik, postdoctoral fellow Thales Barbosa, and alumnus Seth Holwerda, a postdoctoral fellow at the University of Iowa.

In the second paper, published in the Journal of Experimental Physiology, Vranish and doctoral student Benjamin Young looked into the effects of physical inactivity on arterial compliance in response to acute hyperglycemia. A collaborative effort with researchers from several other universities, the study found that the femoral artery of the leg becomes more susceptible to acute hyperglycemia following five days of reduced activity in healthy young men. A reduction in femoral artery compliance, which is indicative of increased arterial stiffness, was only found after the subjects underwent five days of reduced activity.

These findings highlight the strong influence of daily physical activity levels on vascular health and lend further insight into our understanding of the cardiovascular implications of a sedentary lifestyle.

CONHI RANKED TOP NURSING PROGRAM IN AMERICA FOR VETERANS

College Factual recently ranked UTA’s College of Nursing and Health Innovation the nation’s top nursing program for veteran friendliness, up eight slots from the previous year’s ranking. Evaluators examined nursing programs at 526 colleges and universities. They lauded the College for its affordability and noted that it is UTA’s largest academic unit, accounting for more than 40 percent of the student body.

UTA has long enjoyed a reputation as one of the best universities in the country for veterans. The College is a magnet for veterans aspiring to be health care workers.

Other institutions making the list’s top 10 include George Washington University, Jacksonville University, and Drexel.

COLLEGE RECEIVES FAVORABLE RANKINGS FROM SEVERAL OTHER EVALUATORS

U.S. News & World Report ranked CONHI’s graduate nursing program one of the nation’s top 100. Criteria for the ranking include student engagement, peer reputation, selectivity, and faculty credentials and training.

Zippia, a career expert site, ranked the nursing program as No. 2 in Texas, right behind Texas Christian University. Evaluators looked at several factors, including graduation rate, average cost of attendance, and median amount of debt. Rounding out the top five were Texas A&M, Texas A&M International, and Texas Woman’s University. UT Austin was ranked sixth.

Value Colleges ranked CONHI’s nursing Ph.D. program one of the nation’s top 50. The ranking puts CONHI and UTA in the company of leading universities such as Duke, UCLA, and the University of Pennsylvania.

Members will formally launch the organization with a symposium in Dallas on April 1 at the Hampton Inn, 10370 North Central Expressway. The symposium—titled “Impacting Nursing and Health Care in Africa: Why it Matters”—begins at 4:30 p.m. and concludes at 8 p.m. IOAN membership and symposium registration are free. Visit www.ioanurses.org for more information.

ALUMNI FORM NURSING ASSOCIATION TO IMPROVE HEALTH CARE IN AFRICA

Driven by a desire to improve health care in Africa—a continent beset by weak or non-existent health care infrastructure and an inadequate health workforce—several CONHI alumni and their colleagues have formed the International Organization of African Nurses (IOAN).

The alumni include Elvis Ngyia, Mercy Mumba, and Kristen Priddy, who are all graduates of the Nursing Ph.D. program. Two of them hail from Africa: Ngyia, the group’s president, is from Cameroon and vice president Mumba is from Zambia. Priddy, a clinical assistant professor of nursing at the College who regularly does medical missionary work in West Africa, serves as vice chair of the organization’s advisory board.

IOAN’s sole objective is to bring together nurses of African descent to move the nursing profession and health care in Africa forward. IOAN members can propose projects in their home countries, network with other professionals, mobilize resources, and support education, training, and advocacy.

COLLEGE LAB PUBLISHES PAPERS IN TWO LEADING JOURNALS

Jennifer Vranish

In the second paper, published in the Journal of Experimental Physiology, Vranish and doctoral student Benjamin Young looked into the effects of physical inactivity on arterial compliance in response to acute hyperglycemia. A collaborative effort with researchers from several other universities, the study found that the femoral artery of the leg becomes more susceptible to acute hyperglycemia following five days of reduced activity in healthy young men. A reduction in femoral artery compliance, which is indicative of increased arterial stiffness, was only found after the subjects underwent five days of reduced activity.

Combining data from several other universities, the study found that the femoral artery of the leg becomes more susceptible to acute hyperglycemia five days after reducing activity in healthy young men. A reduction in femoral artery compliance, which is indicative of increased arterial stiffness, is only found after the subjects underwent five days of reduced activity.
NOMINATE A DESERVING ALUM FOR CONHI’S COVETED AWARDS

The College will salute several deserving alumni at the Dream Makers gala in March. We invite you to help us select them.

DISTINGUISHED ALUMNI AWARD NOMINATION CRITERIA

Nursing Alumna(us) Leadership Award
- The Nursing Alumna(us) Leadership Award recognizes a UTA nursing graduate who demonstrates excellence in nursing advocacy, patient advocacy, or administration and leadership.
- The nominee’s leadership, dedication, and contributions to the nursing profession will reflect a commitment to advancing the nursing profession.
- Finalists will hold a degree from UTA’s nursing program, demonstrate excellence in his or her area of nursing practice, use creative approaches to improve quality of care, excel in a mentorship or preceptor role, and embody the ideals of UTA’s College of Nursing and Health Innovation.

Nursing Alumna(us) Clinical Expertise Award
- This award recognizes a UTA nursing graduate whose career in nursing demonstrates excellence in clinical practice, outstanding accomplishments, and contributions to the community.
- The ideal nominee will hold a degree from UTA’s nursing program; demonstrate clinical excellence in nursing care; serve as an advocate for patients, families, or communities; use clinical expertise to advance the scope of the nursing practice; and embody the ideals of UTA’s College of Nursing and Health Innovation.

Distinguished Kinesiology Alumna(us) Award
- The Distinguished Kinesiology Alumna(us) award recognizes a UTA kinesiology graduate who has achieved professional excellence, given back to society, inspired others through leadership, and made significant contributions to the field of kinesiology.
- Each nominee will have a degree from UTA’s kinesiology program, demonstrate excellence in their careers, have a track record of inspiring others with leadership, and have made a remarkable contribution to the field of kinesiology.

Academic Partnerships signs as Dream Makers’ title sponsor

Academic Partnerships, a Dallas-based higher education services provider, will be the title sponsor at the College’s inaugural Dream Makers fundraising gala on Saturday, March 24. Several other large companies in the DFW area, including Texas Health Resources, have already signed up as sponsors, and we’d love to line up even more.

This is an important moment for the College. Meeting our fundraising target of $500,000 will provide the means to help more of our students complete their education by offering them significantly larger scholarships.

The success of this event depends to a large extent on you, our alumni and friends.

The following sponsorship levels are still available:
- Platinum: $50,000
- Diamond: $25,000
- Gold: $10,000
- Silver: $5,000

Tables of 10 are also available for $1,500. Tickets are $100 each. To learn more about becoming a sponsor or to buy a gala ticket, contact Megan Nelson at megan.nelson@uta.edu or Alice Mitchell at alice.mitchell@uta.edu.

MAKE A CONTRIBUTION TO THE COLLEGE

Help us educate the next generation of health care workers.
Email CONHgifts@uta.edu for more information.
CONHI SNAPSHOT

Scores of students, faculty, staff, and alumni gathered at College Park Center on the UTA campus Saturday, February 24, for the third annual Health Care Professionals Day. The event features representatives from all the College’s student organizations, who do health checks and promote fitness, among other things.